

PG&E donates land to Forest Service

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Pacific Gas and Electric Co. announced Tuesday the donation of a 151-acre parcel in Tehama County to the U.S. Forest Service, marking the company's second land transfer as part of its Land Conservation Commitment.

The land, which includes a portion of Deer Creek, is subject to a conservation covenant that states the USFS shall manage the property for public uses and protection of natural resources. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy holds the conservation covenant.

The Deer Creek parcel is along Ponderosa Way in the far northern end of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. It is about 25 miles north of Chico at an elevation reaching about 2,500 feet at the highest point.

The property offers outdoor recreation and provides habitat for wildlife and fish, including steelhead and the state and federally threatened spring-run Chinook salmon. It is entirely surrounded by the Lassen National Forest and is adjacent to the Ishi Wilderness Area. The parcel offers primitive camping, hiking trails, horse trails and has designated access to Deer Creek for class IV and V whitewater boating.

The donation was made in coordination with the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council, which was created as part of PG&E's 2003 bankruptcy settlement.

"In partnership with the many organizations that make up the Stewardship Council, PG&E is pleased to permanently protect the natural resources and beauty of the Deer Creek parcel and watershed lands associated with our hydroelectric system for the benefit of current and future generations," said Randy Livingston, vice president of power generation at PG&E.

"The U.S. Forest Service is very pleased to accept this important donation from PG&E," said Randy Moore, regional forester of the Pacific Southwest Region. "This parcel and others that may follow will become part of a priceless system of public lands that will be managed forever as National Forests. We take seriously the expectations of the Stewardship Council and citizens and will work closely with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to protect and enhance this special land and resources."

After the property transfers, the County of Tehama will receive payment in lieu of property taxes and will choose either a lump sum payment or an annuity. The payment to the county will off-set the losses in tax revenue that would have been paid by PG&E.